

SC SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE



IN THIS ISSUE



HURRAH! EVENTS RESTORED

the Noticeboard
is back
P12-13



CHILTERN SOCIETY

how it can help with
Climate change
P20-21



VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

for the magazine,
Parish Council, FISH ...
P3, 5, 10, 22



.....
**THE SOCO
SPRING CLEAN
2022**
IN FOCUS
PAGE 18-19
.....

APR/MAY 2022



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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

It is a lovely Spring day and all the COVID restrictions have been removed. We ought to be joyful but the Russian invasion of Ukraine concerns, frightens and blights all else. The tragic suffering of these people is just beyond belief and even if we are doing as much as possible to help it still seems very inadequate.

My further thoughts are minor by comparison, but this issue of the magazine has seen the events and activities return to the Noticeboard. Not quite a phoenix rising from the ashes but it is a return to 'normal' life in Sonning Common. Consequently, I need your help. We would like volunteers to be responsible for sourcing stories from the following groups.

Children's stories from the Primary school, Youth Club, Book reviews, Scouts, Cubs, Guides, Beavers, School happenings, Cook's corner, Gardeners, reading for the talking magazine and many more ... Additionally, we could do with some more proof - readers and someone to assemble the diary page of events.

I am asking for volunteers and that theme is running through many of the articles for April May. SoCo spring clean is a massive example of what can be done. Whether you are new to the village or have been here for a long time and if you have access to any of the above groups then please do contact me. It is not a huge commitment, just six times per year to persuade someone to write about what is/ has taken place.

I look forward to hearing from you. ●

STOP PRESS can you help with a feature for the next issue about Sonning Common in 1952 versus now. Perhaps find a few people who remember the Coronation, wherever they were then, or lived in the village then?

Diana

Diana Pearman Editor

Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org

MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM



Diana Pearman



Christine Atkinson



Joan Grummant

CONTENTS

- 4-7 Community News
- 10 Parish news
- 12-13 Noticeboard
- 16 5-year housing supply
- 18-19 In Focus –
SoCo spring clean
- 20-21 Chiltern Society
- 22-23 Library/FoSCL
- 24 Tom and Gabriel
- 25 Puzzle page
- 27 Highway Code
- 28-29 Health Matters
- 30-31 Church Pages
- 34 Puzzle answers/
Ads directory

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SC SONNING COMMON
MAGAZINE

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HEAD'S REPORT



I am delighted to be able to write this article today. I am penning it on the day after our secondary school offers were posted out. I am particularly pleased about the significant increase we have had in our local school children and parents selecting the school as the number one preference. Working in the school, day in day out, you know that what we have to offer is very strong indeed. However, whilst we still sit with our 5-year-old OFSTED rating hanging over us it can sometimes be difficult to convince the local community of the tangible improvements we have made. I also want the school to sit firmly at the heart of the local community and

gaining increased numbers of local students will only help this.

The school held its annual production just before half-term. To say the preparations were disrupted would be considerably understating the matter! Staff absence, cast absence, injuries and other restrictions meant the final weekend rehearsals were perhaps not as clean as they normally are. Come the evening of the show however, the cast and crew pulled off an absolute triumph. As Headteacher, I was incredibly proud to lead a school with such talented and wonderful individuals. It was also telling that almost all my staff attended the event either in a support role or as members of the audience. Alongside CESA, a sell out crowd and ex-students returning to do the lighting and sound it was a truly #teammece community event.

Linked to our position in the local community the school has consulted the local community for the second time about the proposed residential development on the most easterly part of the school field. This part of the field serves no educational purpose as it is sloping and unusable for sport. This development will be extremely exciting for our school as it will allow us to build new sports facilities and refurbish our



old equipment. We are hoping to see a new gym and a Multi-Use Games Area to replace the old courts that we currently have and will lose. More information about the consultation can be found on our website. We are inviting feedback until 14 April when the consultation closes.

It is also good to be writing as we move out of the final Covid restrictions. Whilst Covid has not yet disappeared it is nice to return to the normality of students mingling, fixtures and trips and no face coverings. These matters, whilst obviously necessary, have changed the school experience and I am so pleased to see our students getting back to 'proper school.' Fingers crossed life is now getting back to normal. ●

ANDY HARTLEY
Headteacher



SON 15 – LAND AT MAIDEN ERLEGH CHILTERN EDGE SCHOOL

An exhibition covering both the residential proposals and details of the sport mitigation measures that was undertaken jointly by Deanfield Homes and Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge School took place on Thursday 24 March

Details of the material shared at the exhibition appear on the webpage <https://www.maidenerleghchilternedge.co.uk/>

Formal feedback forms have been uploaded and the deadline for comments will be 14 April 2022. However in the meantime if you have any queries, please contact Savills (Deanfield's planning consultants) regarding the residential proposals via email at ReadingPlanningComments@savills.com or the school regarding the sport mitigation works via email at MECEconsultation@amrconsult.co.uk (Maiden Erlegh Trust's project management consultants). ●



Plan for identification purposes only. The red line show where the houses will be built.

PRIMARY SCHOOL AHEAD OF THE GAME

by Christine Atkinson

GLOBAL EDUCATION - JAPANESE GRANT

Madame Baillie, who is the school's languages lead, applied for a language grant from the Japanese Society and the school was awarded £1,800 to support the Japanese language initiative in school. This is really exciting news for all the children.

The money will be used to fund five lessons of Japanese for every class in KS2 and a taster session to all children in KS1. These lessons will be delivered in Terms 4 and 5 by Michiko Sekiguchi, who also works in the school, and Madame Baillie.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the children to further experience the Japanese language and culture, following a very successful Japanese Language Day last year. The remaining money will be used to purchase Japanese educational material, which will be used in these lessons and at Japanese after school club.

CLIMATE - HARNESSING POWER FROM A SUNNY ROOF

Unless you are a parent or pupil at the school you may not know that the roof of the junior school building is lined with solar panels. They were installed in 2017 by Low Carbon Hub who are a social enterprise based in Oxford. The solar panels generate 20,320 kWh of clean electricity every year, which is about 25% of the school's energy costs, and are helping to reduce its reliance on the carbon intensive national grid. At the same time, they also support the education of pupils, demonstrating visually the role of renewables in a low carbon future energy system.

More information available at lowcarbonhub.org ●



FISH NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

COVID-19, and its effect on the NHS and the country, increased FISH's car driver workload dramatically, after an initial falling off as clinics and hospitals cancelled appointments in the early months of the pandemic. Last year FISH received more requests to take people to appointments as the NHS started tackling its waiting lists. FISH's 35 regular drivers have worked wonders and provided transport for, on average, 70 car driving appointments a month, with October and November at over 100, and January heading that way, too. There were fewer appointments in February and March, though.

There is a great variety of appointments – some 10 minutes and some 3 or 4

hours, many are fairly local – to SCHC, local dentist, physio, or Townlands, and some are as far away as Basingstoke or Windsor. Some drivers do several jobs a week and some are only available for one or two a month. FISH needs more drivers, particularly now, and it needn't take up much time. Driving for FISH is not a 'one size fits all' – so even if a driver could only take someone to a 10-minute appointment once a quarter, it could free up another driver to take someone to Basingstoke for 3 hours.

FISH also has other areas for you to flex your volunteering muscles - home visitors to visit those who are housebound or need company; its monthly tea parties in the village hall (2nd Monday in the

month) require cake bakers, sandwich makers and help serving teas; and FISH is still shopping and delivering medication for some clients. ●

ANNA WRIGHT



OUR VERY SPECIAL SCHOOL NEEDS MORE STAFF

by Christine Atkinson

Bishopswood School is a local authority-maintained community special school in South Oxfordshire, that provides specialist education for children aged 2 – 16 years with severe (SLD) or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and complex needs, including children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). A school that prides itself in providing innovative learning techniques to meet the wide ranging needs of their pupils.

With an inclusive ethos Bishopswood endeavours to provide specialist provision alongside its co-located mainstream partners on three sites. The integrated nursery at Valley Road Primary School in Henley on Thames, the Primary Department which is co-located with Sonning Common primary school, and Bishopswood's secondary provision at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge School, Sonning Common.

The catchment area covers much of South Oxfordshire, including Goring, Wallingford,

Watlington, Henley, Sonning Common and the surrounding rural areas. In addition, some pupils live in neighbouring unitary authorities.

As a small but strong community of people they are committed to providing outstanding teaching and learning for the pupils which is achieved by working in close partnership with families, professionals, governors and the wider community. The aim is to deliver a tailored and inclusive education for every pupil.

The school has grown over the years, and now has 75 pupils across the three departments. So there is now a need to recruit more Teachers and Teaching Assistants (Classroom Assistants) and they are looking for people who are caring and supportive of SEN children. It is not necessary to have experience, or to have worked in a school. It is necessary for applicants to want to help their pupils on their journey into the community, beyond

education, and to achieve the very best they can.

The school is looking for people to work full time (30 hours for assistants) and part time, term time only, although there is the opportunity to work at the school's holiday and after school clubs.

Salary is in the range of £14,045 to £15,500 term time only, qualification allowance for appropriate NVQ level qualifications. We also offer comprehensive training and professional development, local government pension scheme and an Employee Assistance Programme (24-hour helpline).

If you are someone who would like to make a difference then please consider working at Bishopswood School, to find out more phone the school on 0118 972 4311 or email office@bishopswoodschool.co.uk to request an information pack. Please visit the school website www.bishopswoodschool.co.uk for more information about the school. ●

The Argyll pub, Market Place, Henley, by Robin Reynolds



desk and my panorama of modern London in the style of Visscher's 1616 engraving.

Feel free to visit – April 30, May 1 and 2, 10am to 5pm. ●

Robin Reynolds and Susan Mildenhall



London 2016, by Robin Reynolds

ON YOUR BIKE IS BACK!

We are delighted to see the return of On Your Bike fundraiser.

Hundreds of people turn up to cycle on the day and it's all good fun for the school and wider community, people come from far and wide to take part. In 2020 and 2021 the event could not take place due to Covid restrictions.

When? Sunday 3rd April 2022

Time - 10am arrival for 10.30am start

Where? Sonning Common Primary school playground (Grove Road) entrance

Pre registration on the website is open until a few days before the ride, but you can register on the day for £10pp

On Your Bike is a feel-good family cycle ride along Sonning Common's leafy lanes

On Your Bike is open to everyone, regardless of age or ability, as it's a ride, not a race! How far? You choose: 6, 12 or 20 miles.

One hundred percent of all entry fees are shared between Sonning Common Primary School PTA and chosen local charities, which this year are, Greenshoots in Peppard and Sonning Common community First Responders.

History

The idea to create an enjoyable ride, which whole families could achieve, came about in 2006. The ambition was not only to

explore the local countryside and have fun, but to promote the benefits of healthy activity and positive fitness.

The first On Your Bike in 2007 was organised with just 4 months planning and no resources, thanks to some amazing volunteers, help from the local health centre and enthusiastic local businesses.

Hundreds of people turned up to cycle on the day and the feedback was so positive, On Your Bike has evolved into a highly popular, annual community event. Whatever the weather (we've pedalled in sunshine and rain) there are always hundreds of people, from all generations, waiting with joyful anticipation at the start line.

• To pre-register your entry

• On Your Bike (onyourbikesonningcommon.co.uk)

• If you are on Facebook, please follow our page to be kept up to date with news and information. On Your Bike Sonning Common

• Thank you to the committee, volunteers and all sponsors.

Special thanks go to key sponsors,

Beville Estate Agents (Sonning Common) and AW Cycles, Caversham ●

Kathryn Fell Willis

Sonning Common PTA



FLORENCE HOUSE

We raised money for the local Memorial Park for a new friendship bench. We raised money by selling homemade Christmas crafts and the home also baked different Christmas cakes/biscuits from around the world. We raised a total of £400 and the friendship bench was bought for the park ●

Martin Honour

Registered Manager



SONNING COMMON HEALTH WALKS

The snowdrops and daffodils may be over – but the bluebells are well on their way! If you want to walk with a friendly group, then join the Health Walkers, and check out our days, times and starting points on the website: www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable.

If you'd like to talk to someone first about any aspect of the Health Walks, phone Chris Brook on 0118 924 2515. ●

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Phil Sweetman

Parish news

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BECOME A SONNING COMMON PARISH COUNCILLOR

How would you like to have a say in remodelling the village centre, directing new sport and recreation facilities and helping to shape housing development in the village?

Due to retirements, the Parish Council wants to recruit two new members to contribute in a significant way to the life of Sonning Common.

There are currently 10 members of the Parish Council with vacancies for two new councillors to be co-opted onto the council.

Sonning Common Parish Council is an elected tier of local government. It has been granted its powers by Parliament, including the right to raise money (the precept) through taxation and to spend this for the good of the village.

The current council is non-party political and we debate and vote on matters as independent individuals. We then all get behind the decisions. A co-opted member has exactly the same status, rights and responsibilities as an elected member.

The Parish Council has a very wide remit, ranging from local planning issues and the Neighbourhood Plan to grant allocations, recreation areas, footpaths and highways, the village hall and the environment, to mention only a few.

We are an enthusiastic, pro-active council and our contribution to enhancing the life of our village at all levels is widely appreciated.

The full council meets once a month on

Monday evenings and is the key decision-making forum in the village. It is supported by four standing committees, Parks and Recreation, the Village Centre, Planning and Finance. Each councillor is normally a member of at least one of these four key committees. The committees normally meet monthly but planning sometimes need to meet twice in a month if there are a lot of applications to consider. We also have some working parties looking at specific matters. Appointments to committees and working parties are made at the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council in May of each year.

Philip Collings, the Parish Clerk, holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration, which, together with having the required number of elected councillors, enables the council to do anything that a private member of the public may do. This wide power is held by only a very few parishes in South Oxfordshire.

The parish office is at the centre of all our work and gives expert, committed support. We enjoy excellent, positive relationships with our county and district councillors.

Being a parish councillor takes time and effort but can be extremely rewarding. If you are interested in becoming a councillor and would like further information, please contact Philip Collings at the parish office. ●

0118 972 3616
clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.gov.uk

PARISH COUNCIL – DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Communication

Public liaison
Emails from residents
Addressing residents' concerns in person
2 x websites
Facebook page
Principal authority liaison
Legal and governance matters

Miscellaneous

Youth Club
Old Copse
Parish office
Neighbourhood Development Plan

Grass cutting / hedge maintenance

3 x play areas
Memorial Park
Skate Park
Allotments
All require equipment repair

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Buildings

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Maintenance and repairs

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BRIAN ROBINSON

My wife and I moved to Sonning Common fairly recently in 2020 along with our two young boys who attend Sonning Common Primary School. We didn't move very far, having lived in Caversham since 2011 but have been lucky enough to develop a wide circle of friends in the village and have been making up for lost time exploring the wonderful local walks and restaurants. I have some experience of public service having spent 11 years in HM Forces then a complete

departure for 20 years in logistics. I now work for the Civil Service based in Reading. I am very passionate about the strong community spirit that characterises the village and am really looking forward to being able to contribute to decisions that affect its future. ●



COUNCIL TAX 2022/2023

The Parish Precept for a Band D home will increase from £1.78 per week to £2.13 per week an increase of 35p per week. This is due to the very large increase in Parish work and responsibilities. ●

wood lane dentistry



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Commemorating the Liberation of Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp

- Online Talk and live Q&A available on the museum website from 7pm, Thursday, 14th April 2022
- Commemorates the liberation of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, 15th April 1945.
- Oxfordshire Yeomanry soldier Arthur Tyler met Polish Holocaust survivor Naomi Kaplan at the liberation of the camp, changing both their lives.
- Free to view on the museum's website, with donations welcome.

Video Link: <https://www.sofo.org.uk/whats-on/lettersfromliberation/>

SONNING COMMON COFFEE MORNING
Sonning Common Village Hall
WEDNESDAY 6TH APRIL
10 a.m. - 12 Noon

All Welcome - Please join us for a cup of Coffee/Tea and Biscuit

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Sonning Common Primary School

Have you spotted the solar panels on our roof? They were installed in 2017 through a partnership with the Low Carbon Hub. In total there are 84 solar panels which can generate 23 kWp.

Our community-owned solar panels help us to:

- Save money
- Reduce carbon emissions (CO₂)
- Demonstrate to our community the benefits of renewable energy and our commitment to a sustainable future.

See how hard they have worked for us in the past 12 months...

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5.4
tonnes of CO₂ saved.
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Our solar panels have provided **25%** of our energy needs.

www.lowcarbonhub.org
@lowcarbonhub

Frances Woolaway BEM
Chief Executive Officer

GREENSHOOTS
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Greenshoots, Manor Farm, Rotherfield Peppard, Nr Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 5LA
Phone: 01491 628 933 • Email: frances.woolaway@waysandmeans.org.uk • Web: www.waysandmeans.org.uk
www.facebook.com/Greenshoots96 • www.facebook.com/The-Ways-and-Means-Trust

3rd April - On Your Bike Sonning Common - Greenshoots is one of the beneficiaries
6th April - Sonning Common WI Coffee Morning, Village Hall - selling plants, jams, pickles & Easter bits
23rd April - Beanpole event, Caversham Court Gardens - selling bedding plants, veg plants, herbs, etc.,
30th April - Greenshoots Saturday opening starts - 9.30 am to 3 pm - plants & more for sale
7th May - Greenshoots Saturday opening - as above
14th May - Greenshoots Saturday opening - as above
21st May - Greenshoots Saturday opening - as above
28th May - Greenshoots Saturday opening - as above
1st June - Sonning Common WI Coffee Morning, Village Hall - selling plants, jams, pickles, etc.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU
ABOUT VICTIMS SERVICES IN THE THAMES VALLEY

Complete our anonymous survey to help shape support for victims of crime

WWW.THAMESVALLEY-PCC.GOV.UK/VICTIMS-SURVEY

VICTIMS UNIT

SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

BREAST CANCER

MR BRENDAN SMITH
CONSULTANT ONCOPLASTIC BREAST SURGEON

Let's talk about

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DR BRENDAN SMITH IS KINDLY GOING TO SHARE SOME OF HIS WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT BREAST CANCER. INFORMATION WILL INCLUDE: WHAT TO LOOK FOR, HOW TO GET HELP IF YOU FIND ANYTHING OF CONCERN, WHAT TREATMENTS ARE AVAILABLE AND HOW BREAST CANCER IS MANAGED. WE ARE HOPEFUL TO RAISE AWARENESS AND INFORM PEOPLE OF WHAT THEY CAN DO TO HELP THEMSELVES. THERE WILL ALSO BE Q&A'S.

WEDNESDAY 4TH MAY 2022 6PM - 7:15PM

TO BE HELD ONLINE VIA ZOOM
TO BOOK YOUR PLACE AND TO RECEIVE A LINK TO THE EVENT PLEASE EMAIL SCPCPP@GMAIL.COM

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11am - 3:30pm - free to enter

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- Children's day - 1st May

Book onto workshops and learn more here: www.chilternsaonb.org/art

An exhibition of local artists and their work. See Chilterns Landscape Partnership.

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Wednesday 13 April | Wednesday 11 May

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Freda Buckner 0118 972 2924

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Search www.sas.org.uk www.windrushwasp.org

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TO EXIST OR NOT TO EXIST? THE 5 YEAR HOUSING SUPPLY

By **DIANA PEARMAN**

Extreme concern was expressed by Sonning Common residents at the Inspector's appeal decision to allow Little Sparrows to build the development of 133 homes. This site is in the AONB directly opposite Johnson Matthey and overlooking Widmore Lane/pond and the village, from the site's highest point. SODC is constantly challenged by the requirement to have a 5 year housing land supply and the lack of this amount was the main reason the appeal was lost. This subject has been a bone of contention in many of the appeals against SODC's decisions at various appeals across the county.

The leaders of the six Oxfordshire Councils have written to the Hon. Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, urging the scrapping of the 5-year Housing Land supply rules. They say, they do not function as they were intended, are ambiguous and misleading, and provide perverse incentives to developers to 'game the system. Oxfordshire County Council asked Mr Gove to abolish the 5-year Housing Land Supply measure and replace it with one that makes objective assessments based on the sites allocated and permitted by a local authority, combined with a scheme of incentives for developers to build out permissioned and allocated sites.

In a letter they all signed 'The purpose of the 5-year housing land supply is to provide an indication of whether there are sufficient sites available to meet the housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies for the next five years. However, even if a local authority can show that they have a sufficient supply, this is still challenged by developers during planning decisions/

appeals. It would, therefore, seem to be an inadequate measure if there is such a degree of ambiguity regarding what it demonstrates'.

Currently, even where a local authority can show that it has allocated sites for housing and consistently delivers on its housing requirements, its housing land supply figures can still be challenged by developers during planning appeals. The inspector in the Little Sparrows appeal allowed the development primarily on the basis that, at that moment in time, SODC did not have sufficient supply of new housing, despite the District having only months earlier adopted its new Local Plan with allocations for almost 30,000 new homes. Councils can allocate sites in local plans and grant planning permissions but have no power to compel developers to build out these permissions. Housebuilders can, through failing to build out on allocated strategic sites or sites where they have planning permission, create strong planning grounds for the granting of permissions on new sites that were specifically not in the local plan. 'Any measure that is ambiguous, misleading and containing contradictory incentives for developers not to build out granted permission is, therefore, not fit for purpose,' the six leaders said. 'We would instead argue that, providing a planning authority has allocated sufficient land for housing and has not unreasonably withheld planning permissions, they should be deemed to have met their obligations around land supply'.

The six Councillors asked for the following

- **To cease the use of the 5-year housing land supply measure and replace it**

with one that instead makes objective assessments based on the sites allocated and permitted by a local authority.

- **Ask that government consider introducing incentives for developers to encourage the earliest possible build out of both permissioned and allocated sites.**
- **If, however, HM Government remains committed to retaining the current inequitable land supply rules, we would at least ask for special consideration to be given to local planning authorities in Oxfordshire by the reinstatement of the 3-year land supply flexibility we were granted through the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal arrangements**

The letter then continued, 'As a result, we all face unreasonable pressures on our current housing land supply figures, leaving our communities increasingly vulnerable to speculative planning applications. This situation is exacerbated by the current market conditions - artificially high demand, slower supply chains, a lack of skilled workers in some areas and delayed build-out rates. This creates concern and indeed anxiety for many residents across Oxfordshire and it leaves the local planning authorities unable to offer any reassurance'.

The letter to Michael Gove was sent at the end of January, if you would like to read it in full, the link is below.

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/02/Oxfordshire-Leaders-5-year-land-supply-letter-.pd>

Thanks to Cllr Jo Robb for the use of part of her article. ●



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Considering selling your property in 2022?

Bridges Estate Agents are delighted to report a fantastic response to the opening of their new Sonning Common branch on the 1st February 2022.

The new office is situated in the heart of the village at 33 Wood Lane and marks an exciting chapter in Bridges long and successful history.

Andy Richards, Managing Director commented "We've been totally overwhelmed by the number of new and former clients who've popped in to say hello and discuss the local market.

Bridges have been selling property in and around Sonning Common for over 30 years and felt the time was right to open in the village to better serve the people of Sonning Common and the surrounding area.

Over the past three decades, Bridges have enjoyed being part of the local

community and are well known for sponsoring local schools, football teams and have gained a glowing reputation for their community spirit and support.

Our clients will continue to benefit from being actively marketed from the Caversham branch as well as from here in Sonning Common, guaranteeing maximum local exposure to potential buyers.

Bridges are very much looking forward to continuing to serve the local community and invite anyone considering a move in 2022 to contact Andy or Liana on 0118 972 2770 or drop in for a coffee and a chat.



Andy Richards



Liana Neighbour

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THE SOCO SPRING CLEAN 2022



Inspired by Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean, we launched The SoCo Spring Clean in 2018 and our community pick has just celebrated its 4th year. After a month of extraordinary weather, courtesy of storms Dudley, Eunice and Franklin, March began wet and cold, so we were absolutely thrilled to see the rain stop and over 125 volunteers joined the pick on Sunday 6 March.

As we eagerly anticipated the arrival of volunteers, there's always a moment when you wonder if anyone will actually turn up. Then all of a sudden they do and the hall glows with yellow hi-vis, buzzing with people of all ages, signing in and collecting equipment. It felt all the more special this year, since lockdowns prevented many community events from taking place. The last SoCo Spring Clean was in 2020 and it was great to see that the village's enthusiasm for the event hadn't waned.

The wonderful Sue Frayling-Cork led a small and perfectly formed team of volunteers from the WI who brought baked treats and expertly catered for our volunteers. After the pick everyone enjoyed hot tea, coffee, juice and a wide

range of baked and donated biscuits, cakes and buns. Much to the delight of our young pickers.

One of our favourite parts of the event is listening to the excited and extraordinary tales of who found what and where. Unusual finds this year were two wheel clamps, an unused Christmas tree, parts of a scooter and a motorbike, a suitcase, a rat, one shoe and a large man-hole cover. It's really fulfilling to hear volunteers so enthusiastic and passionate about wanting to get out there and make a difference.

The village already benefits from the services of full time litter picker Mark Weston and also Tony Parisi so the purpose of our annual pick is to target hotspots and reach areas of the village that are not serviced regularly including; Peppard Road, Blounts Court Road, The Old Copse, Kennylands Road, Blackmore Lane and Reade's Lane. A terrific turn out from 1st Sonning Common Cubs, who are working on their Environmental Conservation Activity Badge and Our World Challenge Awards, did an excellent job in the village centre.

Prior to the event, our litter scouts reported that the levels of litter in the

village were generally good and appeared improved. This may be due in part to the fact that there are many volunteers, friends and neighbours who already regularly pick around the village. Stefan and Joe (Year 9 - Gillotts) are just two of a number of young people who have been picking regularly as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award. Shocked at the amount of litter he was seeing whilst mountain biking in local woods, Joe was inspired to do something about it and started collecting the rubbish he came across. Stefan explained that litter picking has really opened his eyes to the amount of litter here, he's seen the negative impact that litter has on our environment and now has greater appreciation for volunteers who spend their own time clearing it out of respect and love for Sonning Common. However, like our volunteers on Sunday, both realised that when you start looking for litter, there is a surprising amount to be found.

The next SoCo Spring Clean will take place on Sunday 5 March 2023. You can follow the event on **Facebook @soco.springclean** and if you'd like to get involved in any way, please express your interest by emailing soco.springclean@gmail.com

The Peppard Road Project

Like many people, I am constantly bothered by the increasing amount of litter on the verges. The stretch of road between Sonning Common and Emmer Green is a constant distraction. So, in February 2021 I decided I had to do something about it and started picking. Very soon I was joined by picking enthusiasts, Gillian Last and Rachel Barker and by the time we reached Emmer Green we'd also been joined by Emma Stone, Vanessa Stowell and a mystery gentleman picker who was spotted working on the Emmer Green end. Our team of 5 put in well over 50 hours and picked over 25 years of rubbish. How can we tell? The best before dates on food packaging give away the age of the litter!

The litter is building up again and we plan to make The Peppard Road Project an annual pick. We don't pick this area during the SoCo Spring Clean because we're not able to send volunteers to roadsides where the speed limit is over 30. It can be incredibly dangerous, many drivers are considerate when they see us picking, some sadly are not.

It's depressing that this litter exists at all but Stefan is right, it simply won't go anywhere unless we put in our own time to clear it. We show everyone that we are a community that cares about our environment and help break the cycle of existing litter, attracting more litter.

It's also immensely satisfying to know that every single item that we pick up, whether it's one elastic band picked up on the school run, a single can pulled out of a hedgerow or a bag of litter picked up on a regular walk, YOU can make a difference. ●

Emma Lawrence

#BigBagChallenge #LitterHeroes @soco.springclean

We'd like to thank the following people who helped support The SoCo Spring Clean 2022

Peppard Building Supplies - for helping us purchase extra gloves

The Co-op Food Sonning Common - for donating refreshments

WI - for running the kitchen

Waitrose Henley - for donating biscuits

Sonning Common Primary School - for loan of litter pickers

MECE - for loan of litter pickers

Davis Tate - for our signage and kids hi-vis

Team Leaders: Geoff Davis, Mark Weston, Jessica Philbrink, Emma Stone, Alex Lawrence, Katherine Hardman, Leigh Rawlins and Penny Edwards for her support in the Hall.

Special mentions to Leigh for the use of his trailer and to both him and Alex for collecting bags around the village.

South Oxfordshire District Council supplied bags, pickers and high-viz jackets

Biffa put on a special collection to deliver kit and pick up all the rubbish we collected.



THE PART THE CHILTERN SOCIETY CAN PLAY IN CLIMATE CHANGE

Chiltern
Society



Gavin Johnson, Chiltern Society Head of Conservation, tells Sonning Common Magazine how the charity can help us all put nature first.

"I find the variety of the Chilterns landscape full of wonderful surprises, from glimpsing awe-inspiring views from the top of the scarp, to discovering a patch of vivid bluebells on the forest floor." Gavin explains. 'During my time at the Chiltern Society, I have seen the hope Chilterns nature can offer; the part it can play in addressing climate change, the benefits it has on wellbeing, and the passion of those living, working and enjoying the Chilterns.'

'What makes the Chiltern Society's role unique is the work we do with local people,' he explains. 'The wonderful people of the Chilterns are our beating heart. Our small staff team of just eight provides expertise, tools, training, and a framework, to support an army of volunteers; supporting individuals and communities to take sustainable, positive action for the environment.'

The Chiltern Society and its volunteers, who fulfil over 700 roles, are working against a backdrop of intense and increasing pressure on the landscape, which the charity has been addressing for almost 60 years:

- Chiltern's chalk stream habitats have been 60% dry in recent summers due to the devastation of climate change and our insatiable water consumption. Globally scarce, they are home to some of the UK's most endangered species.
- The Chilterns supports important, species rich, chalk grassland, which now covers just 1% of the area in fragmented patches. It needs careful management and protection to withstand threats of climate change, changes in land management and footfall of enthusiastic visitors.
- With unprecedented housing and infrastructure growth in the Chilterns, pressure on the UK's Green Belt has

more than quadrupled in recent years. Unsustainable development can result in habitat fragmentation, pollution, strain on local resource and infrastructure, and the loss of character and cultural heritage.

Last year the charity's volunteers gave over 75,000 hours of their time to help the charity tackle this crisis.

Close to Sonning Common, South Chilterns Path Maintenance Volunteers help keep the areas footpaths open and in good condition, improving the network and encouraging access, so residents and visitors alike can enjoy the countryside and connect with nature. In 2021 the group cleared well over 10,000 metres of pathways but there is always more to do. This in the same region where the Chiltern Society Planning team has objected to the inclusion of the Third Thames Crossing and the North Reading Orbital Route within the

most recent consultation on the Reading Transport Strategy. Charity experts believe the development of the new road and the increase in traffic to the north of Reading would have a significant detrimental impact on the Chilterns AONB and many of the area's villages and towns.

'You can't help BUT have hope when you get to work with such passionate and committed people,' says Gavin

For those with less time to give, but just as much passion for the Chilterns, the charity cares for 12 nature reserves and heritage sites across the AONB for people to visit and enjoy, and runs hundreds of events each year, from walks, to talks and workshops, to seminars. It also provides hundreds of free walking guides for people who want to explore the area, including around Peppard Common, Kingwood, Harpsden and beyond.

In May, you can go along to a Chiltern Society Foraging day in Marlow with Fred Gillam (aka Fred The Forager). Fred has been foraging for his supper for over three decades and will show you exactly what you can safely pick, what to avoid, how to prepare your harvest and most importantly how to make sure that all of this is done sustainably so that other creatures will also get their fair share. Or you may want to join Tim Horton, a former Lecturer and speaker, for a history walk on Watlington Hill. Tim will discuss the importance of this famous 'outlander' to the Chilterns for wildlife and explain its role in the observation of tracts of England from the 16th century to the Cold War.

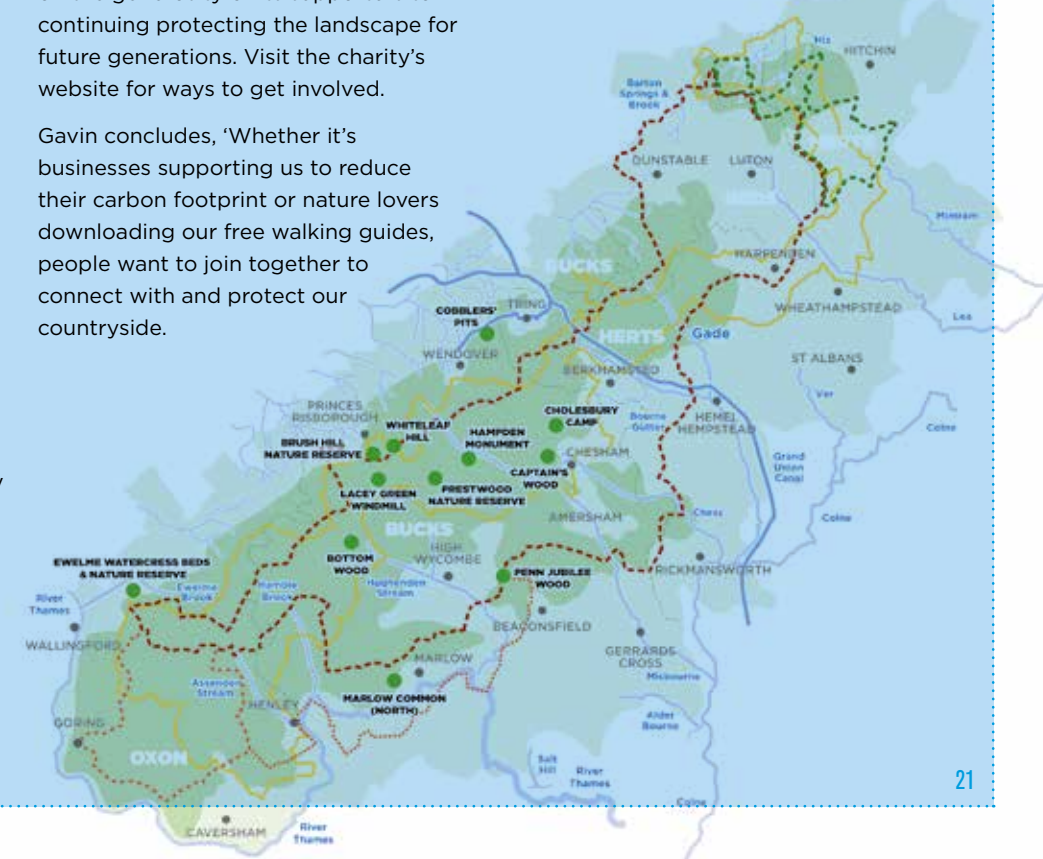


Booking for these events and more on current Volunteering roles are all online. As a charity, the Chiltern Society relies on the generosity of its supporters to continue protecting the landscape for future generations. Visit the charity's website for ways to get involved.

Gavin concludes, 'Whether it's businesses supporting us to reduce their carbon footprint or nature lovers downloading our free walking guides, people want to join together to connect with and protect our countryside.'

The Chilterns is a special place, and together we can keep it that way.' ●

www.chilternsociety.org.uk



A WARM WELCOME AWAITS YOU IN GROVE ROAD

The library opening times are back to normal – but our visitor figures are not!

So what can the library offer you – how can we get more people to make use of the library?

So please come in and say hello! ●

Rosemary Dunstan, Library Manager

For children

Rhymetimes for pre-school children on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month from 11 – 11.30am

Subsidised holiday activities (e.g. ZooLab)

Storytimes every Saturday at 10am, with 'special' Saturdays on 9 April and 16 April (Easter week), involving crafts for children and home-made cakes for sale – and on other Saturdays throughout the year

E-books and e-audio books available free

Summer Reading Challenge

Free reservations – we can get books from other libraries for you if we haven't got the one you want

For adults

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E-audio, e-books, newspapers and magazines all available free using your library card and the Libby or Borrowbox Apps

Music streaming free

Collection point for Food Waste Bin Liners and Lateral Flow Test Kits – while stocks last

Access to Ancestry.co.uk – free in the library

Access to Which? Magazines free in the library – online and physical copies

Digital help – just ask in the library and we'll try to match you with a suitable volunteer

Photocopying and printing (small charge applies)

Free use of computers (and we are a wifi hotspot if you want to use your own device)

Volunteering opportunities – helping children (Rhymetime or storytime helpers), or adults (Home Library Service or Digital Helper)

Jigsaw puzzles to borrow (free)

Scrabble Club (new members needed – ask for details)

Recycling bins for all sorts of things

Someone to chat to if you need to

TALKING MAGAZINE

The Friends of Sonning Common Library have been approached about hosting a reading of the Sonning Common Magazine for the partially-sighted (or anyone else who would like to listen) after each issue is delivered.

It would take place in the library and we envisage it being a relaxed, social affair. Please look out for the posters that will tell you the date and time. Hope you will be able to attend? ●

Alison Smith, Chair of FoSCL



FREE! FREE! FREE!

(And It's Not All Jane Austen and, "Shush, Quiet Please!")

When did you last visit a library? If it was some time ago, you might be surprised by quite how much it's changed. Whilst shouting is definitely not encouraged, there is certainly no need to whisper. In fact, it is a sociable place where conversation is welcomed. So next time you're out and about getting some fresh air, have just dropped your children at school, or are working from home and feel the need to see a human face, why not check out what your local library has to offer?

Obviously, there are books aplenty, but did you know that they are all in good condition as older ones are removed from the system as soon as they start showing signs of wear? Brand new books arrive every week and stock is rotated around the branches so there is an ever-changing choice which includes best-selling authors such as Richard Osman, Peter James, and Lisa Jewell as well as old favourites like Ian Rankin and JoJo Moyes. Non-fiction

books can also be borrowed, so if you want to try mindfulness or plan a trek across the Chilterns then chances are there will be something there for you, and if not, for a small fee, most books can be ordered in. Not a particularly fast reader? Not a problem, as books can be borrowed for 3 weeks and renewed twice, more often if nobody else is waiting for them.

Perhaps you need to make a photocopy or to print something out. Do you know that, for a small fee, you can do this at the library? Use of a computer is free and also provides free access to ancestry.co.uk and Which magazine. A hard copy of the current Which magazine, as well as back-copies, is also available for reference although not to take out. Libraries are one of the few places you can visit and not be expected to spend anything. We are lucky enough to have a good-sized library in Sonning Common with parking right outside the door. It is in Grove Road next to the entrance to the primary school.

It doesn't cost anything to join, and once you are a member you can even benefit from online magazines and newspapers which can be downloaded onto your devices for free. There are currently 3,966 different magazines listed including Hello! Magazine, Minecraft World, Auto Express and the football magazine FourFourTwo UK so something for everyone! Ask at the library for details. ●

Alison Smith, Chair of FoSCL

Opening Times

Monday	14:00-17:00
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	14:00-19:00
Thursday	09:00-13:00 14:00-17:00
Friday	09:00-13:00 14:00-17:00
Saturday	09:30-12:30

WORD WEB

Name the words that can be added to the end of the 3 given words. Some small liberties may have been taken where proper nouns are concerned! The first answer, SAFE, has been done for you. VISIT THE LIBRARY TO COLLECT THE ANSWERS.

Group A		Group B		Group C	
Fail-Play-Night	SAFE	Garden-House-Money		Tea-Room-Lip	
Belly-Glass-Cram		Axle-Candle-Elbow		Bent-See-Body	
Egg-Cabbage-Barry		Naval-Top-Horse		Big-Mr-Tony	
THE COMMON BOND OF THE 3 WORDS ABOVE		THE COMMON BOND OF THE 3 WORDS ABOVE		THE COMMON BOND OF THE 3 WORDS ABOVE	
Question-Harbour-Puppet		Free-Rag-Fair		Bowling-Hat-King	
Big-Tank-Spinning		Small-Sweet-Girl		Test-Carbon-Toilet	
Bake-Roller-Colour		On-Right-Off		Over-Sleep-Speak	
THE COMMON BOND OF THE 3 WORDS ABOVE		THE COMMON BOND OF THE 3 WORDS ABOVE		THE COMMON BOND OF THE 3 WORDS ABOVE	
Designer-Cry-Crack		Top-Side-Dance		Write-Take-Tick	
Down-Lie-Swing		Up-Comes-Glenn		On-Ride-Fly	
Danish-Smokey-Kevin		Nicola-Tony-Douglas		Sea-Great-Stone	
THE COMMON BOND OF THE 3 WORDS ABOVE		THE COMMON BOND OF THE 3 WORDS ABOVE		THE COMMON BOND OF THE 3 WORDS ABOVE	

GROUP D		GROUP E		GROUP F	
From Group A		From Group B		From Group C	
From Group A		From Group B		From Group C	
From Group A		From Group B		From Group C	
THE COMMON BOND OF THE 3 WORDS ABOVE		THE COMMON BOND OF THE 3 WORDS ABOVE		THE COMMON BOND OF THE 3 WORDS ABOVE	

Group G					
From Group D					
From Group E					
From Group F					
THE COMMON BOND OF THE 3 WORDS ABOVE					

TOM FORT GOOD FOR THE GARDEN



I have been shovelling a good deal of compost lately, which is good for the garden, good for the veg and good for me. I like the work, partly because I like to think of all the orange and apple and potato peel and the eggshells and the grass cuttings and the weeds and the rest of it turning into something so damn useful.

You can make perfectly decent compost using one of those green plastic bins, and it is deeply satisfying to peer in at the bottom and watch all the little red worms squirming away as they process the rubbish into nourishing plant food. But we have a biggish garden which produces a lot of garden waste so we need a

slightly more complex system.

We have three heaps. One is the current one, where all the stuff gets dumped. The next is last year's, all covered up and rotting down, where the worms are at work. And the third is the compost ready for use: dark brown, odourless, with a consistency somewhere near that of a well-made chocolate brownie.

I am proud of the construction, which is my own work. The heaps are contained within sheets of corrugated iron, with wooden slats at the front for easy access. To my admittedly biased eye they make a delightful and visually pleasing garden feature, though I accept that not everyone will see them like that.

The one downside is that where you have compost heaps you will invariably host rats, which relish the warmth underneath and the availability of the odd spud to chew on. I don't mind the rats because they keep themselves to themselves. But our dreaded, dratted little dog Meg (yes, still in good health, thank you for asking) will insist on trying to get to know them better, which involves a lot of frantic yapping and annoying digging, which I then have to repair.

But overall, yes. Compost heaps are good. Every gardener should have one. No excuse is acceptable. ●

HELP TO SAVE OUR CHALK STREAMS WHILE SAVING CASH

Chalk streams are an incredibly rare type of water course, which hold huge value to both humanity and nature. Luckily for us they lie along many of our back gardens and throughout our local landscape in the Chilterns. Not only are chalk streams perfect habitats for huge arrays of plant and animal species including otters, kingfishers and salmon but also provide us with the water which we drink, cook and clean with. Let's face it, none of us would mind seeing more wildlife on our morning commutes and no one wants to go without drinking water.

Sadly, in the future this may begin to happen. According to the WWF, there are only around 200 chalk streams worldwide; 85% of which are found in the South (mainly South East) of England. Currently chalk streams are undervalued and not treated well enough. Millions of

litres are taken out of chalk streams and chalk aquifers daily and to many people's dismay, this has been having severe adverse effects on them. In 2019, "67% of chalk streams ran dry" (according to Affinity Water) clearly highlighting the plight facing them.

However, not all hope is lost. Work is slowly starting to be done to help our chalk streams. Affinity Water has stopped abstracting 6 million litres a day from the River Chess (a large chalk stream in the Chilterns) with the aim of helping to "save these endangered streams". The most effective way you can help save our streams is by using less water. The Save Our Streams initiative is giving away "lots of free water saving devices and expert advice" on their website saveourstreams.co.uk. They also advise easy, simple steps such as "leaving your grass slightly longer in dry periods" to allow dew to be trapped

and return into the soil, "wash your car with a bucket and a sponge" instead of a hosepipe, "use a trigger hose" so you can stop the hose for short periods when walking round your garden, "use a bowl to wash vegetables" or take less time showering as every minute less can save up to 18 litres of water. And remember, saving water doesn't only help nature, it also saves you cash, keeping your hard-earned money in your pocket. ●

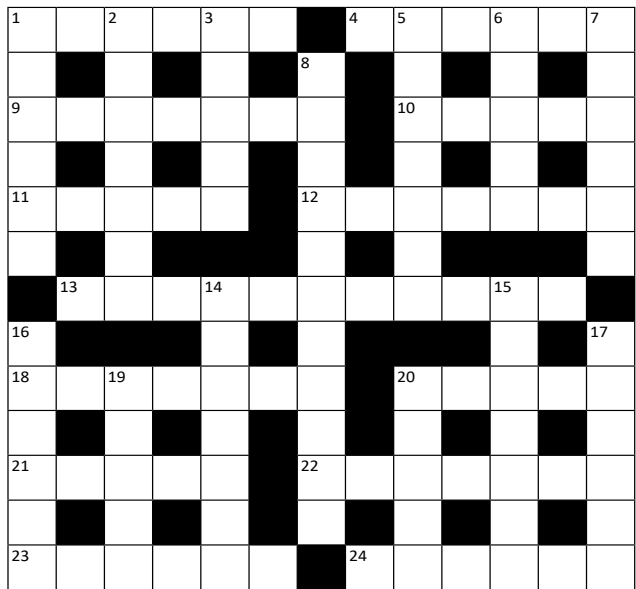
Gabriel Andlauer-Turner



PUZZLE PAGE

By DAVID DUNSTAN

Cryptic crossword



ACROSS

- 1. Horse in a shoe: he has no special powers (6)
- 4. Canoes capsized in seas (6)
- 9. Pen: main place in Wales (7)
- 10. Blue river is more unusual (5)
- 11. Orange is ready to go – or stop (5)
- 12. Storyteller returning on path making tracks (7)
- 13. Bull meets confused rodfisher in this county (11)
- 18. Fruit in the midst of havoc; a doubtful situation (7)
- 20. More genuine regret is seen in Turkey (5)
- 21. Game is no big deal (5)
- 22. Boy includes diagram of northern region (7)
- 23. Tweedy in church with broken lyre (6)
- 24. Horse is with the French for growing crops (6)

DOWN

- 1. Accident in which William is happy (6)
- 2. Ox barge crashed in transmission (7)
- 3. Non-achiever is nearer but not cold (5)
- 5. Ice cream is a bit like maize? (7)
- 6. Pointer to a right argument (5)
- 7. Scatters buttonholes (6)
- 8. Excited adorable old dog (11)
- 14. A way with words, or a Conservative (7)
- 15. Plant produces simulated conversation (7)
- 16. Verse type found in William Bickerton (7)
- 17. Join card game (6)
- 19. Snow leopard in Oz (5)
- 20. Animal disrupted a trip (5)

Sudoku

Grading: medium

						5		
	3			5	1	7	2	
5			8			1		4
		3			5	8		
6			2		4			1
		1	9			3		
3		6			2			8
	5	2	7	4			3	
		8						

Cryptogram

The following quotation has been encoded using a simple letter substitution. What does it say?

NTY HKYCYS VYL ON IMGISF
RLID OKK NTON NTYSY EA NI UY RLIDYF.
UWN NTYB LILY IG NTYV RLID ILY TOKG
OA VWHT
OA ELNYKKEXYLN VS NIOF!
– RYLLYNT XSOTOVY
(NTY DELF EL NTY DEKKIDA)

Quiz: Reading

- 1. What two rivers meet in Reading?
- 2. What are the three Bs that Reading was famous for?
- 3. What is the popular name for Union Street?
- 4. In what year did the Reading Festival start?
- 5. Who was imprisoned in Reading Gaol from 1895 to 1897?
- 6. Which Reading-born comedian made a film called Cemetery Junction?
- 7. What is the name of the sculpture and war memorial in the Forbury Gardens by George Blackall Simonds?
- 8. Which venue was home to snooker's Grand Prix tournament from 1984 to 1994?
- 9. What Reading-born actress starred in 'Titanic'?
- 10. The Museum of Reading contains a full-size replica of what famous embroidered cloth?

See answers on page 34



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DID YOU KNOW?

ARE YOU THE ONE IN SEVEN?



There has been a good deal of media attention over the last few months relating to the 2022 update to the Highway Code. However, a YouGov survey, carried out at the end of January revealed that many Britons had not heard about the Highway Code changing – and even for those who say they had, understanding of the new rules is patchy at best. In fact, one in seven people surveyed had no idea at all that the rules had changed.

When the first edition of the Highway Code was published in 1931, driving a car was a relatively stress-free, civilised activity – you might say more of a hobby for the upper classes. At that time there were about 2.3 million cars on Britain's roads as compared 39.2 million registered at the end of September 2021, and in those intervening years the motoring world has changed beyond recognition.

The so called 'Driver's Bible' is one of Britain's best-selling books, has been updated many, many times since it was originally published and is reckoned to have saved countless lives. Interesting to note that in 1931 when it first went on sale in most bookshops priced at 1 penny (not pence) there were 6,691 road deaths as compared to 1,460 reported fatalities in 2020 which included a total of 4 months of national lockdown. So maybe the lifesaver effect has validity.

However, it's still true that few people

have read it from cover to cover and unless you've recently passed your driving or motorcycle theory test, then the chances are it's been a fair while since you swotted up on the finer points of the Highway Code. Well, now's your opportunity.

The Highway Code has changed. The 2022 updates affect driver priority, pedestrian and cyclist rights of way, mobile phone use behind the wheel and broader use of fines for poor or dangerous driving.

In total, 10 sections of The Highway Code have been updated, with 50 rules being added or updated.

The changes came into force on 29 January 2022 and you can expect strict enforcement of the new rules by way of a) highlighting their existence and b) generating revenues. It's worth appraising yourself of both the new and existing rules of road users.

The updated code now sets out explicitly the creation of a 'hierarchy' where HGV drivers will be more liable than minibus drivers, who will be more liable than passenger car drivers, and so on. The road users most vulnerable in the event of a collision are pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and motorcyclists, with children, older adults and disabled people being more at risk.

We don't have the space to detail the changes so just listed below are the main headlines.

The biggest notable change is that the law will require 'those who can do the greatest harm to others to have a higher level of responsibility to reduce the danger'.

- 1. People crossing or waiting to cross at road junctions now have priority**
- 2. People cycling or horse riding in shared spaces should not obstruct or endanger walkers**



3. Cyclists can ride wherever they feel safest and leave enough space from the kerb and parked cars

4. Overtaking when driving or cycling and crossing double white lines permitted at designated speeds and leaving appropriate space

5. New guidance for cyclists at junctions giving priority if going straight ahead and turning right

6. Mobile phones loophole closed and now prohibits all uses of handheld devices even when stationary

7. Poor driving decisions are more punishable giving local authorities the power to fine drivers

8. 'Dutch Reach' is the recommended way to leave your car using hand furthest from the door

John Pearman

If you are one of the seven, or even if you are not, it will be worth your while checking your understanding of the new rules, web search 'changes to highway code' or go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022>



SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE



Staff news

Sonning Common Health Centre welcomes two new GP registrars;

Dr Sonia McGregor who will be at the HC for 6 months and Dr Sana Shaikh for a year.

Drs Elmustafa and Olaleye have completed their placement with us. Good wishes to them for the future.

After 25 years Loretta on reception is

retiring and she is wished a very happy and long retirement.

Welcome to a new member to the team. Charlotte has been appointed Senior Care Coordinator, helping with health related projects.

COVID Vaccination Update

Sonning Common Health Centre patients have received a total 21840 doses of a COVID Vaccination either directly from

the Practice or at a Mass Vaccination Site. Updated figures below:

1st Vaccination = 7337 – 92% of our Adult population

2nd Vaccination = 7237 – 91% of our Adult population

Booster = 6537 – 82% of our Adult population

SCHC have administered a total of 15712 vaccinations:

1st Vaccination = 5880

2nd Vaccination = 5597

Booster = 4235

Sue Litchfield for SCHC



WANT TO STOP SMOKING?

There are lots of reasons and benefits to stopping smoking. As well as saving money, you will see health benefits right away!

When you stop smoking you'll find that your body and your brain go through a series of positive changes, day by day, week by week. Your body can recover, you'll look better, have more energy and feel healthier all round.



Smoke free Oxfordshire by 2025

Oxfordshire County Council is hoping that Oxfordshire can become smoke-free by 2025, which will help create the county's entirely first smoke-free generation.

Stopping smoking is the best thing an individual can do for their own health and wellbeing and that of other family members.

Stop for Life Oxon has been created to

help you quit smoking in Oxfordshire through our free three-level support service. Smoking is highly addictive and each and every person has their own way of coping when they try and give up.

Some people are able to quit smoking easily. Some find the journey so much harder, and need varying levels of support to help them kick the habit for good.

That's where Stop for Life Oxon comes in, it has been commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council to help Oxfordshire's smokers quit cigarettes for good.

And, as each and every person has different preferences and needs when they're looking to quit smoking, our Oxfordshire-based service has been split into three different support levels to help people, whatever stage they're at in their journey.

Looking to quit smoking in Oxfordshire but feel you have the willpower to do it yourself? We're still here to help; our free Best-You app features digital content such as tips and advice, and a tracker designed to help keep you on the straight-and-narrow.

Our Level 2 service draws on Oxfordshire-based local support systems and experts specifically designed to help people quit smoking.

Again, free to access, our Level 2 service will match you with an Oxfordshire-based health coach to provide you with motivational support through our Best-You app as you try to quit smoking, as well as providing a quit plan, tracker, and advice on Nicotine Replacement Treatment.

For those in Oxfordshire who are finding it really hard to quit, our Level 3 service provides specialist support, including email, phone and face-to-face support as well as free NRT support, direct from the service (subject to eligibility).

Our service is free and available to anyone of any age, no matter how long you've been smoking – whether you've recently picked up the habit or are looking to break free from decades of smoking cigarettes.

Stop for Life Oxon is always by your side in your journey to help you finally kick the habit and enjoy a smoke-free future.

<https://www.stopforlifeoxon.org>

Another helpful website is the NHS Quit Smoking: <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health>

You can download the free NHS Quit Smoking app. ●

Sue Litchfield for SCHC

INFORMATION FOR SOUTH AND VALE RESIDENTS ABOUT THE £150 'REBATE' TO HELP WITH ENERGY BILLS

Thousands of council taxpayers in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse will soon receive a £150 council tax 'rebate' to help with rising energy bills.

The government has announced that most households in council tax bands A-D will be eligible for the rebate however, contrary to some reports, the 'rebate' will not be taken off people's council tax bills when they are issued.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are putting arrangements in place to make a separate payment to households as soon as possible. Here's how the payments will be made:

• If a household pays their council tax

by direct debit – they should be able to receive the £150 directly into their bank account. South and Vale are hoping to start making these payments by the end of April.

• If a household is not on direct debit – it will take longer to make these payments as the councils will need to write to them to confirm their bank details.

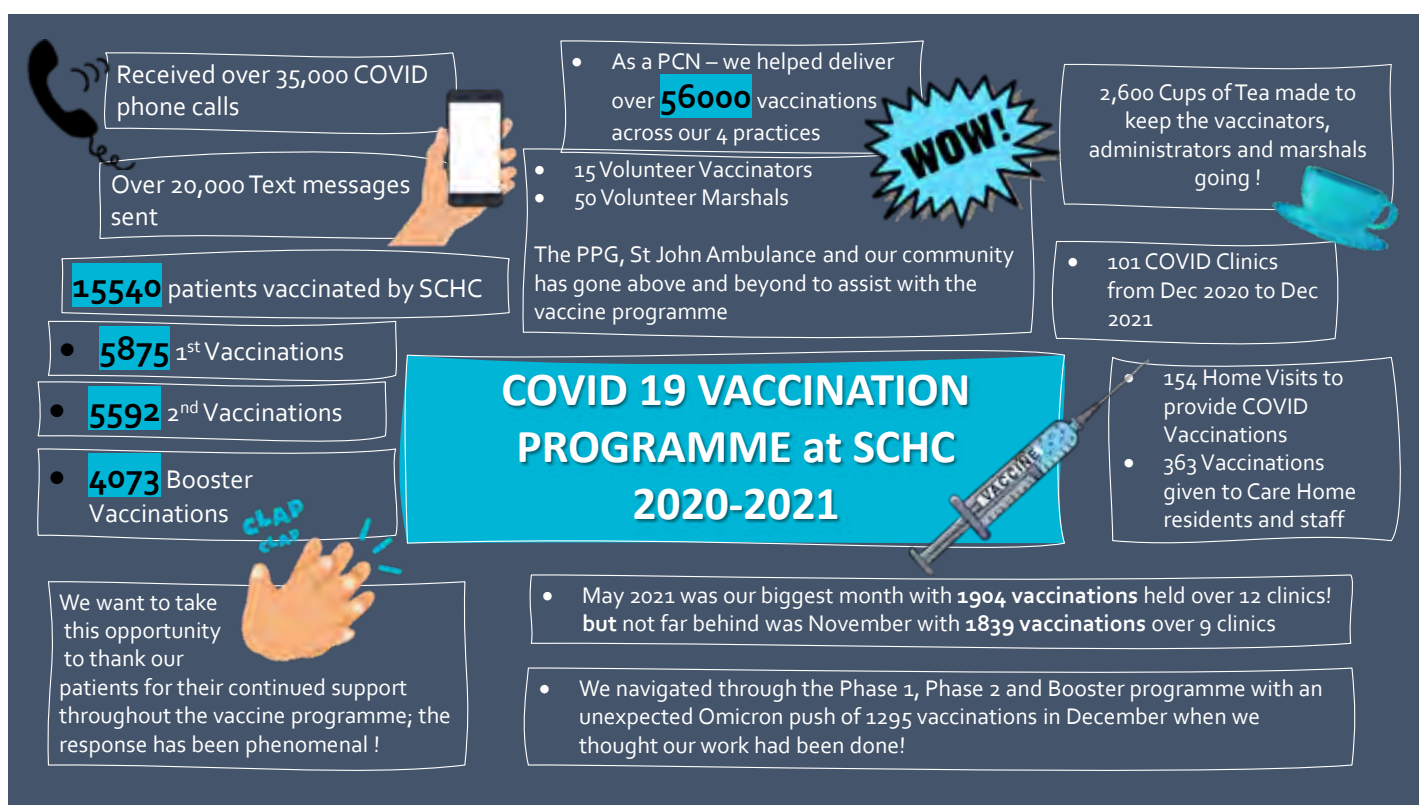
Cllr Leigh Rawlins, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property Assets at South Oxfordshire District Council, said: "I know many people are concerned about rising energy costs so it's very important that they receive this money quickly. If you are not on direct debit, I urge you to sign up now as this will help to ensure that you'll

receive the money as soon as possible."

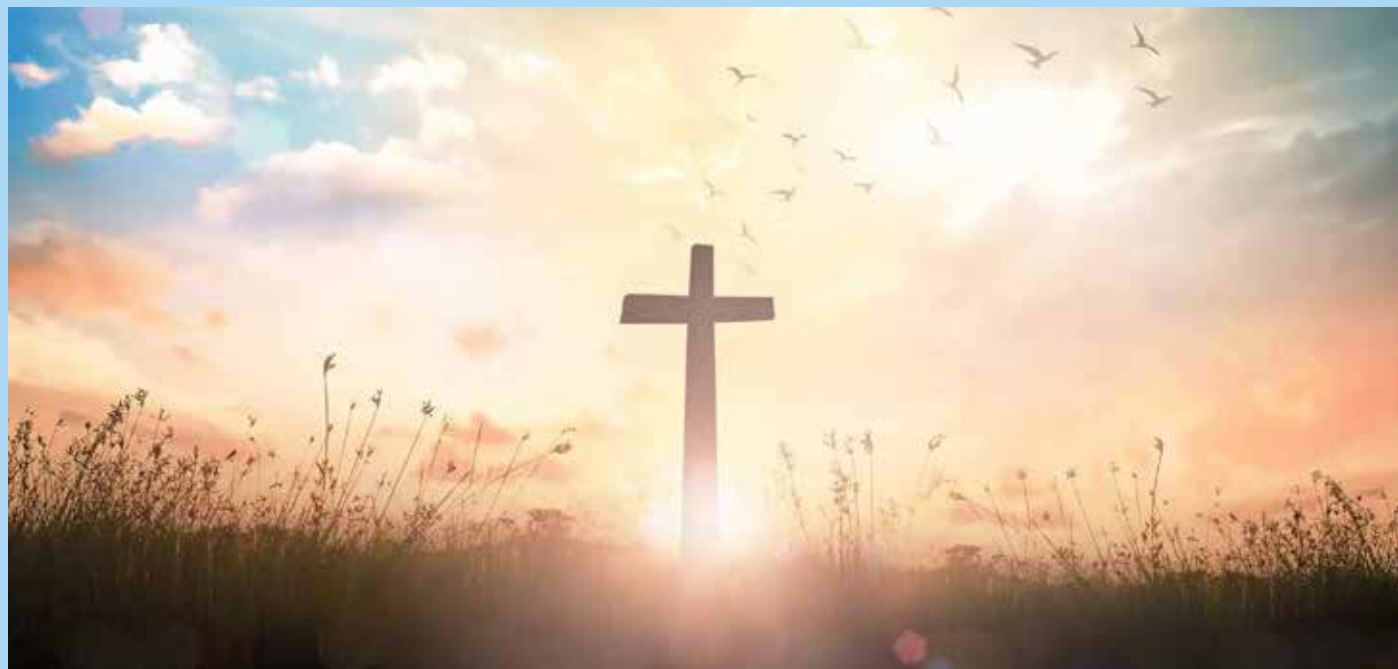
If you are struggling to pay your council tax bill, please visit southoxon.gov.uk/counciltax or whitehorsedc.gov.uk/counciltax to find out about the support available or call 0345 302 2313 (South) or 0345 302 2315 (Vale).

Limited funding will also be made available for households in need who would not otherwise be eligible for this energy rebate. This will be a local discretionary scheme and details will be made available on the council's website in due course.

For advice if you are struggling to pay other bills please visit Citizens Advice website – citizensadvice.org.uk or Vale Community Impact – vci.org.uk ●



Church news



ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

At the time of writing, it is less than a week since Russian troops entered Ukraine and Lent is about to begin. The events in Ukraine, the Covid pandemic and concerns about climate change have highlighted how fragile is our earthly existence. The season of Lent invites us to recognise that fragility and our dependence on a loving, merciful God as revealed in Jesus. Lent gives us hope that despite everything, in the end, all will be well. We know that ultimately all will be well when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus at Easter. Each Monday during Lent the church will be open at 7pm for an hour of quiet prayer and reflection. Everyone is welcome for a few minutes or the whole hour. It is hoped that our Holy Week liturgies (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday) will take place normally this year.

The first Catholic church in Sonning Common was erected in 1947 meaning 2022 is the 75th anniversary of that event. So continuing a brief history from the last issue:

It is 1946 and a piece of land on the Peppard Road had been purchased by the parish of Our Lady and St Anne in Caversham. Fr Bill Ford, the curate, took on the responsibility of establishing a church in Sonning Common. Although the war was over there were still building restrictions, but a number of buildings were no longer required. The site was cleared and in 1947 a building to serve as the first church was identified. It was a Rest Centre (a temporary refuge for those whose homes had been bombed) located near the Grenadier on the Basingstoke Road in Reading. This was purchased, dismantled, transported to Sonning Common and reassembled. During this time Fr Bill continued to celebrate Mass at various locations including the Polish refugee camp, Borough Court Hospital and Peppard Sanatorium. A regular congregation of 20-30 people was established at the latter. It was on the first Sunday of Advent 1947 that the parish priest, Fr Michael Williams, celebrated the first Mass in the temporary building and put it under the protection of St Michael the Archangel.

More of the story will follow next time but if you want to know what is going on today check the weekly newsletter on our website: www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk

Brian Theobald

SPRINGWATER

I am writing this against the horrific backdrop of the war in Ukraine, I pray by the time the magazine is published the situation will have improved for the dear, courageous people of that country. The power and influence of evil is as shocking as ever, but good will prevail in the end, God will have the final victory.

At Springwater we are enjoying the freedom to meet normally, whilst encouraging those who feel safer wearing a mask, to do so and always maintaining good ventilation.

The Spring café has continued to be a wonderful place to go for good conversation or a safe place to seek peace, while enjoying some of the best barista coffees, teas, soft drinks, cakes

and delicious home made lunches I have ever had, all at well below current 'coffee house' prices.

Do check our website for opening times.

We are thrilled to welcome the increasing number of young families who are now coming regularly to Springwater, they are such a blessing. The children bring such an element of fun, whilst also, from time to time, coming out with words of great wisdom, such is the benefit of innocence!

All the usual groups and activities are enjoying a busy time and the Community Food Bank is still very much in demand and as ever, looking for volunteers! We also enjoyed the Lent course Rosemary and Ruth ran.

We have finally decided upon a venue for our church weekend away in early September, it is Hebron Hall in Wales, which even has a heated indoor swimming pool, very exciting!

So, I hope to see many of you soon, either on a Sunday morning, or at one of our activities, such as Compassionate Loaf or The Steering Wheel Fellowship, again it is worth checking our website or phoning the office for details.

God bless you,

Chris Girdler

www.springwaterchurch.org.uk
Tel: 01189724519

CHRIST THE KING, ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, AND ALL SAINTS

Having had much disrupted Easters for two years running, it will be wonderful to celebrate properly in our three churches this year.

Easter Day falls on 17 April, and the three churches in our benefice will be preparing for this during Holy Week with a service at St John the Baptist,

Kidmore End on Maundy Thursday (14 April) at 7.30pm and a Good Friday service, this year also at St John's on 15 April at 2.00pm.

On Easter Sunday itself there is a service in each church:

9.30am at Christ the King, 10.30am at All Saints' Peppard, and 11.00am at St John's

There will be a special Choral Evensong at All Saints at 6.30pm.

Please check our church pages at www.achurchnearyou.com for further information; and if you would like to receive our weekly e-bulletin, which contains details of services plus much else interesting besides, please do drop me a line: revjstickings@gmail.com or scan this QR code to sign up:



God bless

James Stickings (Rector)

CHILTERN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

www.cecuk.church

I'm writing this just after the Russia invasion of Ukraine and I have no idea what the intervening weeks will have held, but our world has suddenly turned upside down with war, injustice, heartache, and devastation. Is humanity not better than this? We have seen such heroic actions and inspiring stories of Ukrainians defending their very lives and freedoms in the face of such a brutal, unprovoked, and powerful enemy. But where is long term hope and real peace to be found?

You may have always dismissed the Bible, but Easter is full of hope that transcends this world and the life we now live.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

from the dead." 1 Peter 1:3:

A supernova is a star dying and it's one of the most beautiful sights observed by our space telescopes. The intense colours and remarkable displays show a beauty not seen during the star's life. When Jesus died, his death displayed such love and grace to undeserving people. The shining star of heaven died in a supernova of grace! Come and hear more at CEC or pick up the Bible and discover for yourself what this is all about. There is hope beyond the pain of this world.

Ben Densham

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

This year saw a welcome return to a live service in All Saints' Church, Peppard Common on Friday 4 March. The service was prepared by Christian women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland and the church was beautifully decorated to reflect these different nations. About sixty people attended the service and enjoyed readings by members of seven local places of worship and joined in songs backed by a joyful choir. Following the service a light supper was served which brought together many people for a chat and catch up on news.

We already look forward to next year's service at the Church of St. John the Baptist, Kidmore End, on Friday 3 March 2023 when the host country is Taiwan. ●

Jane Starkey



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PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 25

Cryptic crossword
 THE CLEVER MEN AT OXFORD
 KNOW ALL THAT THERE IS TO BE KNOWN,
 BUT THEY NONE OF THEM KNOW ONE HALF AS MUCH
 AS INTELLIGENT MR TOAD!
 KENNETH GRAHAM (THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS)
Quiz: Reading
 1. Thames, Kennet 2. Beer, bulbs and biscuits
 [Simonds Brewery (1785-2010), Suttons Seeds
 (1837-1974), Huntley and Palmers (1822-1976)]
 3. Smelly Alley 4. 1971 5. Oscar Wilde 6. Ricky
 Gervais 7. The Maiwand Lion [named after
 the Battle of Maiwand (1880) in Afghanistan
 in which 329 men from the 66th (Berkshire)
 Regiment of Foot died] 8. Hexagon 9. Kate
 Winslet 10. Bayeux Tapestry

Sudoku

9	4	8	3	1	6	2	5	7
1	5	2	7	4	8	6	3	9
3	7	6	5	9	2	4	1	8
4	2	1	9	8	7	3	6	5
6	8	5	2	3	4	9	7	1
7	9	3	1	6	5	8	4	2
5	6	7	8	2	3	1	9	4
8	3	9	4	5	1	7	2	6
2	1	4	6	7	9	5	8	3

Cryptic crossword

E	C	H	E	R	L	A	R	B	A	E	L	E
G	I	C	O	G	L	A	P	L	A	I	R	G
D	N	B	I	N	O	T	D	A	B	I	R	D
R	E	A	V	O	C	A	D	O	R	T	R	E
B	H	O	R	D	S	H	I	R	E	S	A	V
S	A	V	O	X	O	F	O	R	D	S	A	V
A	M	B	E	R	B	E	R	A	I	L	W	A
A	O	N	B	E	R	A	I	L	W	A	A	V
V	A	N	S	E	A	R	A	R	E	P	O	R
P	O	L	O	E	L	O	R	O	P	R	E	P
S	C	E	A	N	S	O	C	E	A	N	S	O

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Bonner Locksmiths	14	KC Improvements (Driveways & Patios)	9	Sonning Common Garage	32
Brambles (Florist)	33	Kidbys Sheds	9	Sonning Common Pet Care	14
Bridges Estate Agents	17	Kingfisher Garden Maintenance	11	Small Moves (Deliveries & Removals)	9
Carl Woods Butchers Ltd	26	Kingfisher Kindergarten (Pre School)	Back	Spruce Property Maintenance Service	8
Caversham Aerial Services	8	LC Chauffeurs	26	T C Fuller Plumbing & Heating	35
Compass Water Softeners	14	Mike Dockree Windows	14	The Mobile Hairdresser	14
Curtains, Blinds, Pelmetts	33	Mike Farina Auto Services Ltd	Back	Time 4 Pilates	9
Davis Tate Estate Agents	2	Milo Technical Support (Computer Problems)	35	Tomalin and Son Funeral Directors	Back
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Ell's Decor	33	Paul's Painting, Decorating and more	11	TV & WIFI Services	33
Functional Physio	Back	Peppard Building Supplies	35	Village Barbers	32
G B Removals	11			Wee-Cot Seating	11
Graham Blake Soft Furnishings	9			Wheelers Electrical Contractors	26
Heath & Watkins	15			Wood Lane Dentistry	11

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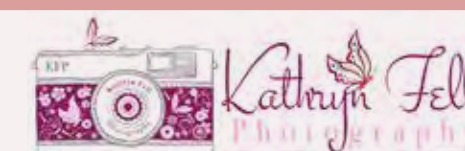
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